



Click.
citamn.afrc.af.mil



Tweet.
[@citizenairman](https://twitter.com/citizenairman)

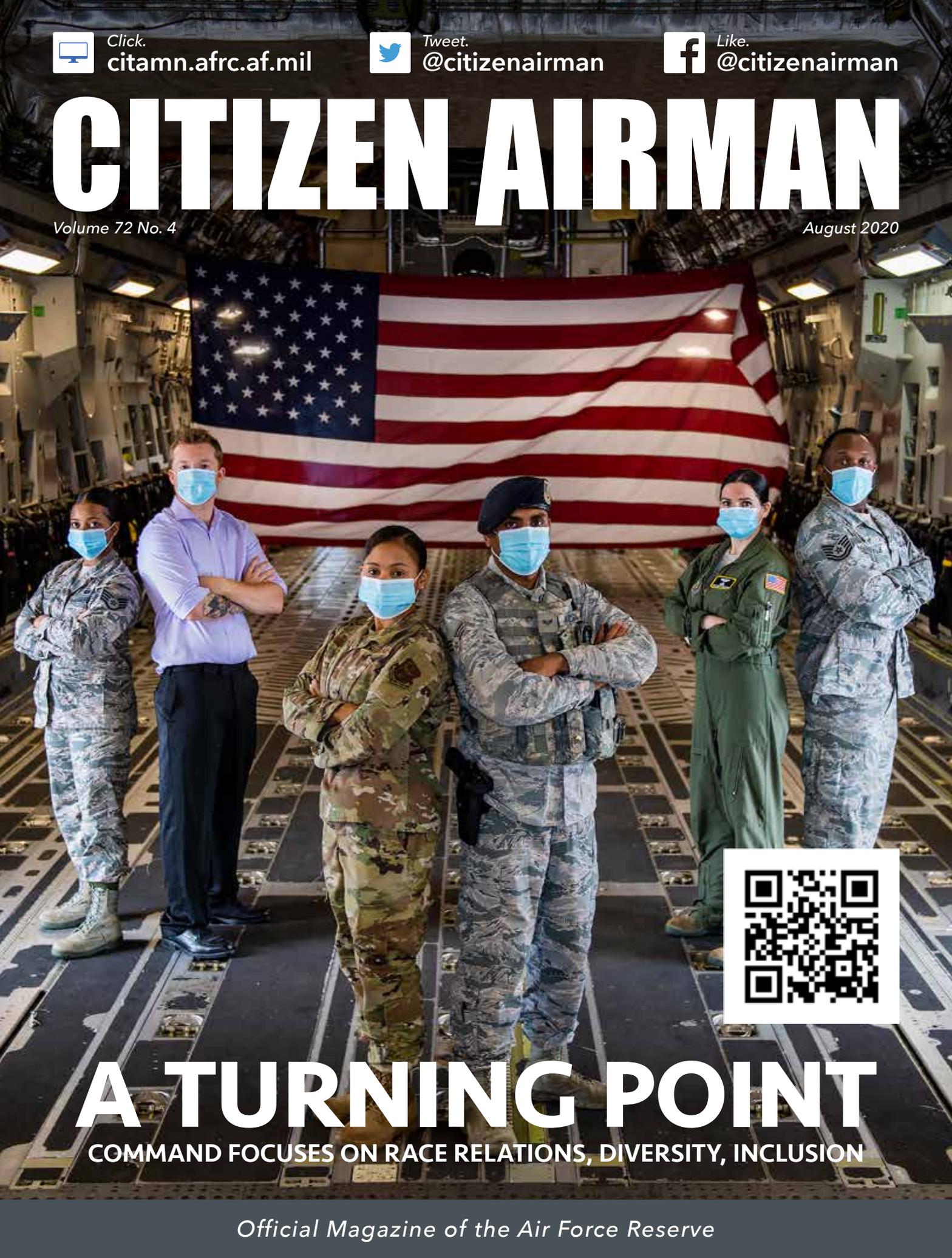


Like.
[@citizenairman](https://www.facebook.com/citizenairman)

CITIZEN AIRMAN

Volume 72 No. 4

August 2020



A TURNING POINT

COMMAND FOCUSES ON RACE RELATIONS, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION

Official Magazine of the Air Force Reserve

BUILDING TRUST IN A TIME OF UNCERTAINTY

"Discussing our different life experiences and viewpoints can be tough, uncomfortable and therefore often avoided...We can no longer walk by this problem."

-General David L. Goldfein, CSAF

The ongoing pandemic and the civil unrest across the nation have given us pause to reflect on the continuing racial inequality in our society and our Air Force.

Recently, the Command Chief and I were able to have a candid conversation about racial inequities with a small group of our Reserve Citizen Airmen stationed at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, North Carolina. I am personally grateful that those Airmen trusted us enough to provide us their perspectives on the difficult issue of racial inequity.

We encourage leaders at all levels to demonstrate caring and build trust by engaging in tough but crucial conversations about our values, focusing on inclusion, especially with regard to race. It is hard to have these discussions, yet respectful and apolitical conversations will forge a path toward positive change.

This is also a time for self-reflection and understanding that we may have unconscious bias.

The Department of the Air Force is taking a hard internal look at racial injustice. In addition to this review, the Air Force Reserve will conduct our own review to assess potential discriminatory practices within the command.

The Command Chief and I are committed to both objectivity and transparency in this process. As an organization, we have already appointed advisors to the Air Force Inspector General's Racial Diversity Review. We have also

implemented unconscious bias training for our commanders.

Further, the Command Chief is heavily involved in a think tank with the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force focused on inclusion and fair treatment of all Airmen.

While these measures are a start, we cannot be successful without your help. Many of you have already been asked to provide feedback directly to the Inspector General's office via an anonymous survey. I encourage absolute candor in giving this feedback, as it will provide insight into our blind spots.

Racial disparity in both disciplinary actions and career development opportunities undermines both institutional and interpersonal trust, which underpin mission success. Addressing these issues is central to one of our Air Force Reserve priorities: *Developing Resilient Leaders*. Systemic racial disparities undermine the ability for even the most determined leaders to build trust within their units.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 addressed many issues surrounding racial inequality; however, it did not prevent continuing racial injustices from occurring in our society.

This is a complex problem without simple or short-term solutions. Instead, it is a call to continually commit ourselves to improve the environment in which we serve, to include all Citizen Airmen.

To help your unit engage in critical conversations, our chief Diversity and



Lt. Gen. Richard Scobee

Inclusion officer provides Equal Opportunity facilitator training. Further, as a part of our commitment to transparency, we have launched the "Share Your Story" campaign to encourage Airmen to share their experiences with discrimination and what we did to address it – or what we can do to better address it in the future. Contact your local Public Affairs office if you want to share your story.

The rifts in society serve as fracture points for adversaries that seek to exploit our division and we must address them decisively. In the face of civil unrest and a global pandemic, you have shown resiliency, innovation, professionalism and courage. We must now show empathy.

Many members of our Reserve family are anxious right now. Reaching out, listening and allowing your fellow Citizen Airmen to express their emotions is critical toward building the trust necessary to defend against those who see this moment of division as an opportunity.

The Command Chief and I are proud to serve with each of you and have the utmost confidence that you will continue to rise to meet future challenges.

RICHARD W. SCOBEE
Lieutenant General, USAF
Chief of Air Force Reserve
Commander, Air Force Reserve Command

WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER



Chief Master Sgt. Timothy White is shown here with the Senior Enlisted Council at March Air Reserve Base, California, in January, before COVID-19 social distancing practices were implemented. Left to right are Chief Master Sgts. Octavio Ortiz, Imelda Johnson, Cynthia Villa, Shirley Ozio, White, Travon Dennis, Jim Loper and Billie Baber.

Let's face it, there is a lot going on in the world right now. From daily increases in COVID-19 cases, political differences amplified during this election year and racial tensions driving change across our nation, this is an unprecedented and often difficult time for us all.

Diversity, equality and addressing racial disparity are top priorities for not only the boss and me, but also the Department of the Air Force. We are listening to your concerns and recommendations and moving swiftly to make our command the best it can be. To be honest, this is long overdue.

I have been honored to speak with Airmen at several units over the past few months about how systemic racism and inequality permeates our ranks. These are challenging conversations to have. I don't pretend to have all of the answers, but I am thankful we are starting a dialogue, reaching out for help and clarity when needed, and practicing empathy when we might not understand.

This is the stuff that matters and it is a subject not to be taken lightly. As one of my favorite thought leaders, Brene Brown, stated, "We are in a fight for the dignity of human beings."

On June 9, the Department of the Air Force stood up the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force to tackle some of these tough problems, change policies and remove barriers to serving. In one short month, the task force has made great strides by revising dress and appearance regulations, implementing unconscious bias training, improving shaving waiver procedures and working to increase ROTC scholarships for minority serving institutions. This is real progress and I'm hopeful more positive changes are to come.

We are all in this together...the worst thing we can do is

nothing. Please join the boss and me in making our command a place where people of all genders, races, ethnicities, backgrounds and sexual orientations experience equality and benefit from the same career opportunities.

If you need help navigating this uncomfortable territory, please don't hesitate to reach out to our resident expert, Lee Floyd, the chief Diversity and Inclusion officer at AFRC HQ. I respect Lee tremendously as a friend and teammate, and admire his ability to facilitate crucial conversations. If you have a suggestion for me and the boss on what we can do to improve our organization, please reach out to me at afrc.ccc@us.af.mil.

Lastly, please take care of yourself, your family and your fellow wingmen, especially during these challenging and difficult times. As always, it's an honor and privilege serving as your chief.

TIMOTHY C. WHITE JR.
Chief Master Sergeant, USAF
Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chief of Air Force Reserve
Command Chief Master Sergeant, Air Force Reserve Command

Table of

CONTENTS

Volume 72 No. 4 // August 2020

FEATURED STORIES



06

Joshua J. Seybert

A Turning Point

National events spur Reserve to take a closer look at race relations, diversity, inclusion



14

Airman 1st Class Jacob Derry

Pegasus Lands in North Carolina

916th Air Refueling Wing receives its first KC-46



20

Courtesy photo

A Different Kind of Enemy

Reserve medics discuss what it's like to battle COVID-19

ON THE COVER:

Airmen assigned to the 911th Airlift Wing pose for a photo at Pittsburgh International Airport Air Reserve Station, Pennsylvania. The 911th AW, like every organization within the Air Force Reserve, is made up of many individuals with diverse backgrounds. For more on the Reserve's renewed look at diversity, inclusion and race relations, see the story on page 6. (Joshua J. Seybert)



NEWS & PEOPLE

Reserve Ravens
AFRC looks for Security Forces to fill critical new positions .. **13**

A Winding Path
Recruiter follows unusual road to success **17**

ARPC
Creates safe space for honest conversations **19**

The Reserve Hypersonics Team
Citizen Airmen and the really fast Air Force of the future **24**

Maintaining Readiness
Acquisition Reservists and Air Force's COVID-19 response . . . **26**

Cyber Resiliency
Reservist a critical part of efforts to keep weapon systems safe . . **27**

Motivated by His Kids
Deployed enlisted defender earns doctoral degree **28**

HQRIO: Medical IMAs
Mobilized for historic COVID-19 response **29**

Determined to Serve
Critical care nurse joins the Reserve at age 50 **30**

Reserve Citizen Airmen assigned to the 307th Medical Squadron return to Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, after helping with COVID-19 relief efforts in New York City.



Master Sgt. Ted Daigle

Leadership
Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr.
Chief of Staff, United States Air Force

Lt. Gen. Richard Scobee
Commander, Air Force Reserve Command

Col. Beth Horine
Director, Public Affairs,
Air Force Reserve Command

Magazine Staff
Bo Joyner
Editor, Public Affairs,
Air Force Reserve Command

Anthony Burns
Graphic Designer, Public Affairs,
Air Force Reserve Command

Contributing Writers
Staff Sgt. Tara R. Abrahams, Master Sgt. Chance Babin, Staff Sgt. Katrina M. Brisbin, Raoul Fischer, and Tech. Sgt. Josh Williams

Citizen Airman magazine (ISSN No. 0887-9680) is published bi-monthly by Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command Office of Public Affairs for the commander of Air Force Reserve Command. Periodical postage paid at Warner Robins, Georgia, and additional mailing offices. Copies are mailed, free of charge, to the homes of all Reservists. Content is normally news articles and features developed for release to commercial media as part of the Air Force Reserve's continuing public affairs program. Opinions of contributors are not necessarily those of the Air Force Reserve. All photos are U.S. Air Force photos unless otherwise indicated. Readers-per-copy ratio: 4-1. Send inquiries and submissions to HQ AFRC/PAOM, 155 Richard Ray Blvd., Robins AFB, GA 31098-1661. Or, email them to hqafrc.pa.citizenairman@us.af.mil. For questions about the magazine or its contents, call (478) 327-1771 or DSN 497-1771.

Moving? PLEASE DO NOT SEND CHANGES OF ADDRESS TO CITIZEN AIRMAN. To continue receiving the magazine, unit Reservists, as well as people serving a statutory tour of duty, should send a change of address to their military personnel flight or unit orderly room. Individual mobilization augmentees should call the Total Force Service Center-Denver toll free at 1-800-525-0102 or DSN 665-0102.

POSTMASTER: Please send all Forms 3579 to Citizen Airman, HQ AFRC/PAOM, 155 Richard Ray Blvd., Robins AFB, GA 31098-1661.





A Turning Point

National events spur Reserve to take a closer look at race relations, diversity, inclusion

By Bo Joyner



As the photos on these two pages and the pages that follow help illustrate, the Air Force Reserve is an amazingly diverse organization comprised of people from different races, cultures and backgrounds. Recent events across the nation have prompted the Reserve to take a closer look at where it stands on diversity, inclusion and equal treatment, and what it can do to improve race relations.

The spring and summer of 2020 will long be remembered as a tumultuous and pivotal time in our nation's history – a time of civil unrest, protests and demonstrations. The deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and other African Americans inspired thousands to take to the streets to demand an end to racial profiling, discrimination and injustice.

African Americans who have long felt they were unfairly targeted by police officers were joined by people of all kinds and colors demanding immediate change. The social unrest sparked countless conversations around the world about equality, race relations, diversity and inclusion. It also sparked an awakening within the Air Force and Air Force Reserve as senior leaders called for all Airmen to take an introspective look at where they stand on diversity, inclusion and equal treatment, and what they can do to improve race relations within the ranks.

“Our society is imperfect, but each of us can make positive changes within our spheres of influence,” Lt. Gen. Richard Scobee, chief of the Air Force Reserve and commander of Air

Force Reserve Command, and Chief Master Sgt. Timothy White, Scobee's senior enlisted advisor and AFRC command chief master sergeant, said in a recent message to all members of the Reserve team.

“The command chief and I have taken steps every day of our careers to foster an environment where every Reserve Citizen Airman is treated fairly, is valued, and feels their contributions are valued regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or orientation...and we will not stop. But there is more we all can do,” Scobee said.

“Chief White and I have already begun exploring ways we can engender a more equitable environment within the Air Force Reserve. We encourage you to begin by taking this opportunity to have those tough conversations about our values and treating everyone with decency, respect and equality, especially with regard to race. Often times it is hard to have these discussions, yet respectful and apolitical conversations have served as a catalyst for change and are the bedrock this country will survive on. It shows you care.”





Lee Floyd, AFRC's Diversity and Inclusion officer, has been a part of hundreds of these conversations over the years, and he knows they can sometimes be difficult.

"It's not easy to sit down with people who don't look like you do and don't have the same background as you and really open up and share your feelings, your biases and your prejudices," Floyd said. "But it's critical that we have these conversations if we are going to get to a point where we truly embrace diversity, treat everyone equally and celebrate the differences that everybody brings to the table."

If you look strictly at the numbers, the Air Force Reserve does pretty well in the area of diversity. Floyd's latest numbers show that the Air Force Reserve is about 69% white, 17% black, 11% Hispanic, 4% Asian, 1% Alaskan Native/American Indian and 1% Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander. Hispanic is considered an ethnicity, not a racial category, that is registered separately and in addition to the other racial categories. In addition, about 8% of Reservists decline to provide information about their racial or

ethnic heritage. About 72% of the Reserve population is male and 28% is female.

When looking at diversity by the numbers, Floyd said AFRC compares favorably to both the Air Force and the Department of Defense.

"But numbers are a tricky thing," he said. "What we are hoping to do is establish a highly effective, efficient and harmoniously diverse work force where everyone is treated fairly based solely on merit, fitness and capability. And you can't do that by simply tracking numbers. The Air Force Reserve is diverse. What we need to work on is the inclusion piece of the puzzle and making sure we include everyone, give everyone the same opportunities and don't discount what somebody else brings to the fight just because they don't share your same viewpoints."

Scobee has repeatedly touted the Reserve's diversity over the years and said he thinks diversity is one of the Reserve's greatest strengths.

"The Air Force Reserve is an amazingly diverse organization,"

he said. "And, by far, the most diverse aspect of our command is our people. By seeking diversity and respecting individuals with different backgrounds and different perspectives, we are stronger and more effective. Ultimately, our diversity enhances our ability to generate combat power for America."

Air Force and Reserve senior leaders were quick to speak forcefully about the issue of racial equality following George Floyd's death in late May.

Then-Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Kaleth Wright posted a lengthy message about his experiences as a Black enlisted leader and declared, "I am George Floyd."

Then-Chief of Staff David Goldfein denounced Floyd's death during an encounter with Minneapolis police, calling it a national tragedy. Goldfein and Wright then held a virtual town hall online to talk about racial issues in the Air Force.

"This is not a Minneapolis issue, this is an Air Force issue," Goldfein said. "What goes on in the streets of America, we know is going on to a certain extent in the Air Force."

White, AFRC's command chief and a police officer in his home state of California, was one of many police officers who spoke out strongly following Floyd's death.

"I stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the vast majority of my law enforcement brothers and sisters in blue, of all races, who are equally outraged over this and other incidents where the oath we took to serve and protect was not honored," he said. "These officers and incidents do not represent us; they disgust us, they dishonor us, they disgrace us."

Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr., who will become the new Air Force chief of staff in August, posted an emotional video in which he talked about the challenges of being a Black man. He will be the first Black man in U.S. history to serve as chief of staff of a military service.

One of Brown's first actions was to select Chief Master Sgt. JoAnne Bass as the 19th chief master sergeant of the Air Force. She will be the first woman in history to serve as the highest ranking noncommissioned member of a U.S. military service.



Diversity and Inclusion: The Urgency of Now

By G. Lee Floyd

"We the people of the United States of America in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our prosperity."

The preamble to the Constitution of the United States promises all citizens five key elements: Justice – reasonable and fair treatment not just for some, but for all. Tranquility – peace of mind and the right to live free of oppression and discrimination. Defense – against all enemies foreign and domestic. Welfare – all the health, happiness and fortunes this country has to offer. Liberty – freedom from oppressive restrictions imposed by authority on one's way of life, behavior or political views.

Unfortunately, the events of the past few months have made it soberingly clear that there is a large segment of our population who believes the country has reneged on these promises.

As a result of the recent social unrest across our country, we find ourselves perched upon the cliffs of hope overlooking the dawn of a new era – an era in which every citizen can recognize his or her unalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. so eloquently stated in his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, there is an urgency of now!

The Air Force Reserve has long been a leader within the Department of Defense in the areas of diversity and inclusion. We can continue to lead the way or we can fall prey to the false sense of accomplishment through gradualism.

The urgency of now requires courage and immediate action: courage to challenge unconscious biases and deep-rooted socialization that makes us who we are, and courage to talk to and listen to those who do not look, talk, think or believe the same as we do.

Then there must be immediate and meaningful action: action that is lasting and not temporary, and action that will ensure every Reserve Citizen Airman feels and believes he or she is a valued and integral part of team AFRC.

The fact that we are living in, going through and will emerge on the other side of turbulent times provides us an opportunity to affect an everlasting paradigm shifting change.

As Mahatma Gandhi said, it is imperative that we recognize our greatest ability as humans is not to change the world, but to change ourselves.

Change, however, takes time, and changing perceptions requires patience and persistence. We must work to change the mindset of those who view the military as a safe haven – a place where there is no racism, no sexism and the thought that everyone is on the same team, when in actuality, nothing could be further from the truth.

The Air Force Reserve is a microcosm of society. Are we to believe that we are different when we put the uniform on? Do we



As a result of what has been happening around the country over the past few months, the Air Force has initiated an immediate and comprehensive review of racial disparity within the service.

The review will be conducted in two phases. Phase one will assess African American racial disparity in uniformed military discipline processes. Phase two will focus on African American racial disparity in leader development systems, including enlisted, civilians and officers.

"We recognize other disparities exist, and these should be reviewed as well," an Air Force News Service story said in announcing the review. "However, for this immediate effort to be effective and result in lasting and meaningful change, it must be narrowly targeted. The efforts that will be undertaken upon the completion of this review will not be exclusive to a single minority group. We're confident the lessons we'll learn and recommendations we'll provide will benefit all of our Airmen and Space Professionals."

The Air Force Inspector General team has already begun to gather information contained in a wide array of previous reports, studies and various databases across the Department of the Air Force. Although the data is helpful, the most important information will come directly from Airmen and Space Professionals.

"It is critical that we hear from you because you are a central part of the solution," the news release said. "We



want to make sure our Air and Space Professionals are able to share their experiences and concerns, and we want to empower them to be a part of the solution. Their voices will be heard and captured for the record. We have a tremendous opportunity here, and we will not waste it."

Enlisted, civilian and officer Airmen and Space professionals across the services are being asked to take an anonymous email survey facilitated by the Air Force Survey Office. This survey will allow all enlisted, civilian and officer members to voluntarily and anonymously share their experiences and thoughts on potential solutions.

Col. Eltressa Spencer, the director of AFRC's Commander's Action Group, is one of two AFRC representatives on the Air Force's racial disparity review team. She raised her hand immediately when the call came out seeking volunteers to serve on the team.

"It was a no-brainer," she said. "This is an extremely important topic that I am very passionate about and I wanted to be part of the solution. This is an issue that will take some time to solve, understanding we did not get here overnight. This problem is a result of generations of societal injustice and mistreatment of African Americans. I have had many opportunities to progress in my career, and feel very fortunate to have made it to the rank of colonel, especially considering I am prior enlisted. I do realize however, that everyone, particularly other people



bring our civilian selves into our military life and close our civilian eyes while in uniform? Whether we wear the uniform or not, we still view the world through the same lenses.

Regardless, there are no rose-colored glasses that will paint a pretty, nonracial, unbiased picture. Therein lies the problem. What you do, see and feel as a civilian is also the same sight, actions and feelings that are with you on drill weekends, TDYs, deployments and annual tours.

In obtaining this long overdue change, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for equality by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must always conduct our struggle with the utmost dignity and discipline.

And so, it becomes increasingly clear that Reserve Citizen Airmen are tied to the Citizen and, more importantly, we are one in the same.

These past few weeks have challenged us to our core. The country has been forced to come to terms with some painful realities. We are aware of serious inequities that currently exist in the country, DoD, Air Force and, more specifically, the Air Force Reserve.

Knowing is only part of the equation. Now comes the hard part – self-evaluation. If we are to grow as a country, grow as a people and grow as an organization, we must begin the sometimes-painful practice of self-evaluation.

Self-evaluation will help us garner an appreciation and understanding of who we are as individuals. In addition, we should be able to determine if we are or have been a barrier to someone else's progression.

Over the past several weeks, I've had the honor of facilitating and participating in numerous guided discussions on race relations. These have been extremely intense and soul wrenching sessions that reveal and uncover the many wounds carried by our Reserve Citizen Airmen brothers and sisters.

I was, and continue to be, heartbroken by some of the stories I heard. Our courageous team members told their stories in a non-threatening, safe environment that provided a much-needed portal to share some of their most personal, private and painful experiences. I was amazed at the sympathy and empathy shown during these crucial conversations.

I want you to know that Lt. Gen. Scobee, Chief Master Sgt. White, the entire leadership structure and I are extremely honored to serve with each of you. We want you to know and believe you are truly a valued and integral part of this team.

We want you to know we recognize and value the differences each of you bring to the fight. We want you to know if we've made you feel as though we were not listening to you in the past, we endeavor to ensure you know we are listening to you moving forward.

Please continue to engage in the difficult discussions we've started. Be sure to acknowledge, appreciate and respect each other. Always remember that diversity is our strength and inclusion will enable us to fly, fight and win!

(Floyd is Air Force Reserve's chief diversity and inclusion officer.) ■



of color, are not afforded the same opportunities that I have had. We must get to the point that every Airman has the opportunity to grow in the military to their fullest potential, be treated fairly, and of course feel valued."

Senior Master Sgt. Kenya Jackson, the aircraft armaments functional manager in AFRC's Logistics, Engineering and Force Protection Directorate, is the command's other representative.

She, too, was quick to volunteer when she heard about the Air Force team.

"People talk about change all the time, but I truly want to be part of the change," she said. "Growing up in southern California, I grew up in a true melting pot where there were people from all different races, cultures and backgrounds. In my middle school, there were probably 40 different languages spoken. I'm not saying everybody always got along, but I don't remember anybody having a problem with somebody else just because of the color of their skin. I can't say the same thing about our Air Force. I never truly experienced racism until I joined the

military."

Jackson said she is optimistic the Air Force's new racial disparity review team can make a difference.

"It's extremely important that we address this situation now," she said. "I'm honored to have the opportunity to serve on the team and try to make a difference."

As AFRC and the Air Force embark on this renewed effort to ensure equality and promote diversity and inclusion, Scobee encouraged all members of the Reserve team to practice tolerance and embrace diversity.

"Our diversity is our strength," he said. "Our individual, unique perspectives make us an effective team. What binds our team together is greater than what separates us. I encourage you to remain true to our core values – integrity first, service before self and excellence in all we do." #ReserveReady #ReserveResilient #ReserveReform ■

#ShareYourStory

In light of the Air Force's renewed focus on diversity and inclusion, the Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command Public Affairs Office has launched its #ShareYourStory campaign – a unique opportunity for members of the Reserve Citizen Airman team to share their stories of overcoming or addressing discrimination in the Air Force.

"While racial discrimination is at the top of the Air Force's list of efforts to address right now, we want to welcome any Airman with a story of how he or

she has addressed challenges in any area – be it gender, sexual orientation, substance abuse, religious beliefs, adverse UCMJ actions, rising out of poverty or any of the many other stories that are out there," said Col. Beth Horine, AFRC's director of public affairs.

Members of the Reserve team are encouraged to record their own #ShareYourStory videos or work with their local public affairs office to tell their story. Videos should be less than 10 minutes in length and should use the hashtags #ShareYourStory and

#ReserveResilient.

"We learn from each other's stories and their perspectives," Horine said. "That can help us develop a better understanding of the differences that ultimately make a more inclusive Air Force Reserve culture for all," Horine said.

For more information, contact your local public affairs office or e-mail AFRC.PAWorkflow@us.af.mil. ■

Reserve Ravens

AFRC looking for Security Forces to fill critical new positions

Air Force Reserve Command officials are looking for Security Forces personnel interested in serving on special teams trained to protect aircraft and aircrews in areas where there is limited or unreliable levels of security.

"AFRC formalized its Phoenix Raven program in October of 2019," said Chief Master Sgt. Michael Caldwell, AFRC Security Forces manager. "We've had individual Ravens for many years, but this is the first time we have had a fully functional program with Raven unit type codes."

Caldwell said AFRC developed its program in conjunction with Air Mobility Command and currently has 42 new Raven positions spread across five bases.

"These five hubs were strategically placed at key locations throughout the United States, geographically close to air bases with strategic airlift capabilities," Caldwell said.

"The Phoenix Raven program is critical because it provides AFRC with the organic capability to secure our aircraft in some of the most vulnerable and unpredictable locations across the globe."

Raven teams help detect, deter and counter threats to aircraft by performing close-in aircraft security; advising aircrews on force protection measures; conducting airfield assessments; and assisting aircrews in the performance of their duties when not performing their primary security duties.

"In addition to supporting missions at home station, AFRC Ravens are staged globally to support combatant commands and various crisis and contingency operations," Caldwell said.

Prospective Ravens must complete 28 days of training at the Air Force Expeditionary Center at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey. Subjects covered include cross-cultural awareness, aircraft searches, airfield surveys, de-escalation techniques, weapons proficiency and flight-deck denial.

"Once they complete the training and certification, members are awarded the special experience identifier, an official Raven number and authorization to wear the coveted Raven tab on their uniform," Caldwell said.

AFRC Raven UTC grade authorizations are staff sergeant through master sergeant, and are located only at identified hub locations. Individuals interested in becoming a Raven should work with their chain of command and HQ AFRC/A4S. For more career broadening and developmental opportunities, contact Caldwell at michael.caldwell.4@us.af.mil. #ReserveReady #ReserveReform ■

Air Force Reserve Command is looking for Security Forces personnel to join the Phoenix Raven program. Ravens are specially trained to protect aircraft and aircrews in areas where there is limited or unreliable levels of security.



Pegasus Lands in North Carolina



The first KC-46 Pegasus lands at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, North Carolina, June 12. The KC-46 will fall under the 916th Air Refueling Wing, replacing the KC-135 Stratotanker. (Maj Cruz A. Dolak)



916th Air Refueling Wing receives its first KC-46

From Staff Reports

In a low-key, COVID-compliant closed ceremony on June 12, the Air Force Reserve's 916th Air Refueling Wing, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, North Carolina, accepted its first of 12 KC-46 Pegasus aircraft.

Lt. Gen. Richard Scobee, chief of the Air Force Reserve and commander of Air Force Reserve Command, and Chief Master Sgt. Timothy White, senior enlisted advisor to the chief of the Air Force Reserve and AFRC's command chief master sergeant, served as delivery officials and were on board the aircraft as it arrived.

"This KC-46 delivery is a great example of how we are reforming our Air

Force Reserve and transitioning to the next generation of airpower," Scobee said. "Being able to be here with you for the delivery of your first KC-46 Pegasus is an honor and really special for me during these trying times."

Col. Stephen Lanier, commander of the 916th ARW, was ecstatic to welcome home his 77th Air Refueling Squadron crew. The closed ceremony marked the dawning of a new era for the service men and women who serve in the 916th.

"As the first unit-equipped Air Force Reserve wing to receive the KC-46, we are poised to leverage our deep knowledge and experience to realize the capabilities that are inherent in the KC-46



Base fire trucks spray down the first Pegasus as it lands at Seymour Johnson. The 916th is scheduled to receive 12 total aircraft through the end of 2021. (Senior Airman Jacob B. Derry)

– air refueling, aeromedical evacuation and airlift, as well as the ability to operate in contested environments," Lanier said.

The occasion was the culmination of months of preparing for conversion. However, the 916th and its subordinate unit, the 77th ARS, cherished the last moments they had with the KC-135 Stratotanker.

"A large portion of the squadron went on the last unit deployment to Turkey," said Lt. Col. Darin Dial, 77th ARS commander. "We then flew several USAFE (U.S. Air Forces – Europe) tanker support rotations, and topped off KC-135 operations with final missions to Puerto Rico and Savannah, Georgia."

The 77th also helped secure \$1.7 billion of combat assets during last year's hurricane evacuations.

"The last 12 months leading up to the arrival of the first KC-46 has been a memorable year," Dial said.

While the wing continuously supported sorties, Airmen started conversion training from the KC-135 to the KC-46 last winter.

"In December, we sent our first crew to Altus AFB, Oklahoma, for KC-46 training," Dial said. "Since then, we've continued to send pilots and boom operators to Altus and McConnell AFB, Kansas, for KC-46 qualification training."

The maintainers have also been hard at work learning the nuances of the new aircraft.

"The KC-46 is completely different than the 63-plus-year-old aircraft we had been previously working on, and very little of our KC-135 equipment was able to be used to repair and fly the new air frame," said Chief Master Sgt. Michael Birmingham, 916th Maintenance Squadron superintendent. "We are currently in the process of divesting more than 600 pieces of KC-135 tools and test equipment that cannot be used on the KC-46. The other side of that is we acquired more than 2,500 new pieces of equipment, designed especially for the KC-46."

Along with conversion training, the maintainers also learned about Federal Aviation Administration regulations.

"This will be the first aerial refueling

aircraft to meet all FAA requirements as well as those set forth by the Air Force," Birmingham said. "In the training, they learned how to complete documentation in accordance with FAA regulations on a dual-certified aircraft when aircraft system maintenance or modifications need to be accomplished."

In the first 72 hours at its new home, each KC-46 will have to undergo a rigorous inspection to ensure every piece the factory installed made it from the assembly floor to Seymour Johnson.

"This inspection requires 916th technicians to inspect and record every major component's serial number," Birmingham said. "Our maintainers will also open panels and complete serviceability inspections to make sure every system operates per Boeing, Air Force and FAA technical requirements."

The 916th is scheduled to receive 12 total aircraft through the end of 2021. Seymour Johnson is the fourth base to receive the KC-46. McConnell received the first in January 2019, followed by Altus in February 2019 and Pease Air National Guard Base, New Hampshire, in August 2019.

"It's a rare opportunity to deliver a new aircraft to the Air Force," Dial said. "The crews feel privileged to take part in this historic moment for the wing."

931st ARW Reaches KC-46 Conversion Milestone

At about the same time the 916th was receiving its first KC-46, the Reserve's 931st Air Refueling Wing, McConnell AFB, Kansas, reached a milestone in its own conversion from the KC-135 to the KC-46.

Wing members gathered on the flight line June 6 to celebrate the wing's last KC-135R training flight during a unit training assembly.

Though this was not the last time a 931st ARW aircrew would fly a KC-135, the flight was the last UTA training flight in a Stratotanker.

The KC-135, tail number #58-0124, departed McConnell early in the morning as the lead tanker of a combined four-ship formation including three KC-46s.



Lt. Gen. Richard Scobee, Air Force Reserve Command commander and chief of the Air Force Reserve, helped deliver the first KC-46 to the 916th ARW. (Ashley Snipes)

The KC-135 aircrew flew to Texas to refuel its sister Reserve unit, the 301st Fighter Wing at Carswell Air Reserve Base.

The pilots included Lt. Col. Jonathan Flores, Maj. Chris Foote, Capt. Derrick Lopez and 2nd Lt. Ben Stone from the 18th Air Refueling Squadron. Master Sgt. Clay Dotson, 905th Air Refueling Squadron boom operator, performed air refueling on the flight.

"Knowing it was the last 135 UTA training sortie, I think of all the past and present members who I've had the privilege of serving and flying this amazing aircraft with," Dotson said. "We're now turning the page to a new chapter in the 931 ARW, with a new weapons system and the capabilities it will bring to the fight."

To increase the amount of KC-46A Pegasus aircrew training and air refueling, the three flying squadrons of the 931st ARW will no longer fly the KC-135 during UTAs. This is all part of the continuing familiarization and operations testing that began with arrival of the first KC-46 in January 2019.

Since the stand-up of the 931st Air Refueling Group at Team McConnell in 1995, the KC-135 has been the workhorse of McConnell's Reserve and active duty flying squadrons. Along with its

members, it has travelled worldwide and been part of the major forces defending the United States.

Now, after 25 years, many flying hours and a number of military operations, the tanker still continues to serve the 931st ARW and the 22nd Air Refueling Wing to protect its members and the nation; its presence on the flightline shrinking only to make way for more KC-46s.

"It's definitely the end of an era for our flight crews, but our Reservists are ready," said Col. Kevin Rainey, 931st Operations Group commander. "Our Reserve aircrews are more than prepared and although the KC-135 workhorse is an amazing aircraft, it is time to fully commit to the KC-46 during our UTAs."

The 931st ARW is the first associate Reserve unit to fly and maintain the new KC-46. The first Reserve squadron to fly the KC-46, the 924th Air Refueling Squadron, stood up at McConnell in 2017 to prepare ahead of time.



The KC-46 will eventually replace the U.S. Air Force's aging fleet of KC-135 Stratotankers which have been the backbone of the refueling fleet for more than 50 years. The KC-46 will provide more refueling capability, an increased capacity for cargo and modern aeromedical evacuation capabilities. #ReserveReady #ReserveReform

(Ashley L. Snipes, 916th ARW public affairs office, and Tech. Sgt. Abigail Klein, 931st ARW public affairs office, contributed to this story.)

A KC-135 Stratotanker lands after flying for the last time as part of routine training during the 931st Air Refueling Wing unit training assembly June 6, at McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas. (Tech. Sgt. Abigail Klein) Bottom, a McConnell KC-46 refuels another KC-46 on June 10. The aircrafts were carrying Secretary of the Air Force Barbara Barrett, Senator Jerry Moran and Congressman Ron Estes as Team McConnell aircrews demonstrated the new aircraft's aerial refueling capabilities. (Airman 1st Class Marc A. Garcia)

A Winding Path

Recruiter follows unusual road to success



In his first full year of being an Air Force Reserve recruiter, Tech. Sgt. Kyle Hauser met his yearly accession goal in less than four months. Hauser has spent his 14-year Air Force career bouncing back and forth between recruiting and air transportation. (Courtesy photo)

By Master Sgt. Chance Babin

In fiscal year 2020 – Tech. Sgt. Kyle Hauser's first full year of being an Air Force Reserve recruiter – he met his yearly accession goal in less than four months. How did the personable Airman achieve such remarkable success? By applying what he learned throughout an already successful Air Force career.

Hauser, a line recruiter with the 351st Recruiting Squadron at Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina, began his Air Force career in 2006, when he was 19. Looking for a way to pay for college and gain some independence, he went to a recruiting office in his hometown of Peru, Illinois, where all four branches were represented.

"My plan was to speak with all of the recruiters and gather as much information as I could to make my decision," Hauser said. "I had very limited knowledge of the military, but assumed I was going to join

the Navy since my grandpa was in the Navy during World War II."

Hauser spoke to recruiters from the Army, Navy and Marines before finally getting to the back of the office and talking to the Air Force recruiter.

"Our initial interview made me unsure," he said. "The recruiter didn't seem overly interested. We chatted briefly and he recommended I do more research and ended the session. As I walked back down the long hallway towards the exit, the Army and Marine recruiters I had chatted with were in the hallway giving me a second pitch as I tried to leave."

The Air Force recruiter didn't even take his phone number.

"As I thought about what had happened, my 19-year-old self determined it was like dating," he said. "The attractive girl at school wasn't chasing the guys. She was the one being chased. I immediately

thought the Air Force is the attractive girl here."

Hauser learned a lot about the soft sell that day. He didn't know it at the time, but that lesson would pay off later when he was on the other side of the recruiting table.

He enlisted as an air transportation troop. During his time as a "port dawg," he helped convince his little brother, cousin and brother-in-law to all join the Air Force. As his first contract was approaching the end, Hauser wanted to find a different challenge.

His old supervisor had been a recruiter and told him to give it a shot. He applied, and soon the young senior Airman was on his way to recruiting school.

"Recruiting for the active duty was awesome," he said. "I immediately loved the competition and the autonomy it provided. I was an E-4 with my own



Hauser said he believes his time as a "port dawg" has helped him be a better recruiter. His boss said what makes him a great recruiter is the fact that he lives by the Air Force's core values every day. (Courtesy photos)

office in a mall and my flight chief was more than an hour away. I also found the accountability refreshing. Your successes and failures were yours alone. You also had a large amount of creative control on how you wanted to meet your goals."

After two successful years as an enlisted accessions recruiter, Hauser was selected to move into a line officer recruiting position and was later tapped to manage his squadron's line officer accessions program.

Toward the end of his four-year recruiting tour, Hauser began missing the travel and camaraderie of working on base with his port dawg team. He opted to go back to his old career field.

"I tried everything to talk him out of it, but one thing about Kyle is his relentless determination," said Senior Master Sgt. Michael Lear, his supervisor at the time. "I mean this in the best way, but once his mind is set on something, he stops at nothing to achieve it. In this case, he loved his last job and there was unfinished business that needed to be checked off."

Stationed at Travis Air Force Base, California, Hauser said he enjoyed being back in the air transportation field, but he definitely missed the many challenges recruiting offered.

A chance meeting with an Air Force Reserve recruiter at the Travis shoppette led Hauser to become a recruiter in the Reserve.

"He had his blues on with his gold recruiting badge," Hauser said. "I struck up a conversation and we chatted about recruiting. Then I kept running into him and it turned out he worked on the first floor of the building I worked in."

Hauser initially put in a package and was approved to return to active duty as a recruiter, but the timing didn't work out to make the switch.

With encouragement from the Reserve recruiter and his mentors, Hauser decided to make the move from active-duty port dawg to Reserve recruiter.

"I felt good about the process, and the time line worked out perfectly so I made the transition," he said. "I am grateful it worked out and that I had the opportunity to recruit once again."

He was able to attend an Air Force Recruiting Service five-day course for prior recruiters as a refresher and to learn some intricacies of the Reserve.

Stationed at Charleston, Hauser had a phenomenal first year.

"I attribute that to Team Charleston's culture and high morale," he said. "I knew I was on a winning team when I arrived

by watching how the flight interacted as I found my place. I immediately felt welcomed and wanted to provide value. I finished the year at 174% of my goal – but had the support from my entire team to do it."

Hauser said one of the first things he noticed about Reserve recruiting was the difference in the size of his recruiting zone. There were six active-duty recruiters in his area of responsibility. He reached back to his past experience of managing a large zone as a line officer recruiter on active duty.

"Line officer recruiters have large zones and tons of interest on active duty," he said. "So I had to become familiar with how to work electronically and be as efficient as possible to maximize my reach."

The experience of working electronically has proven helpful since virtual recruiting has become a way of life now for recruiters during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"When the schools in South Carolina closed, my wife and I began schooling at home, like most Americans," he said. "Since then, we have positioned ourselves to go completely virtual. Our recruiting leadership worked hard to get virtual enlistments approved, which was a big deal. That allowed us to get our new

Airmen who had been waiting due to COVID-19 sworn in."

Fortunately, Hauser reached his yearly goal several months before COVID-19 forced stay-at-home orders. For fiscal year 2020, which began on Oct. 1, 2019, he met his goal of 37 accessions on January 30, 2020.

"I know I was the first line recruiter to make goal," Hauser said. "I am only in my second year of recruiting for the Air Force Reserve, but it is unusual for a line recruiter to make goal as fast as I did. While I may have met my goal, my flight, squadron and command have not made goal, so I am still pushing hard to help accomplish the mission and meet our end-strength number."

Hauser said he treats the first quarter of the fiscal year like a deployment, where he grinds it out with little to no distractions.

"Every October 1st, your year resets with a new goal," he said. "For me, tackling that first quarter makes the rest of my year just feel better. I work long hours

October through December – 12-hour days Monday through Friday and even some Saturdays – so I can be ahead and enjoy the holidays. This is not a mandatory recruiting thing but this is how I prefer to operate."

While transitioning to the Reserve was initially a challenge for Hauser, making the move to working as a Total Force recruiter is a much easier task.

The Air Force is embarking on a Total Force recruiting enterprise approach to recruit the nation's best talent. In addition to recruiting for the regular Air Force, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard, Total Force recruiting also encompasses Air Force Academy admissions, Air Force civilian service and Air Force ROTC.

"I think the Total Force initiative is awesome," Hauser said. "This may sound crazy but when I joined the Air Force, I had no idea there was an Air Force Reserve or Air National Guard. I just went to the nearest recruiting office."

He said he has a great relationship with an active-duty recruiter in

Columbia, and they are constantly funneling people to the right place based on the applicant's needs.

Senior Master Sgt. Anthony Jones, Hauser's flight chief, said there are usually pros and cons with getting a prior-service recruiter to join his team. This time, the pros far outweighed the cons.

"I found the advantages of having a prior-service Air Force recruiter on the team is that he already understood the general hustle mentality that is needed to be successful," Jones said. "He had experience with explaining Air Force benefits and relating to applicants and families, and he has both active-duty and Air Force Reserve experience."

"The thing that makes him a great Airman and great recruiter is that he exhibits our Air Force core values. He engages with the team constantly to help make everyone better. He is a true force multiplier for our team." #ReserveResilient (Babin is assigned to the Air Force Recruiting Service public affairs office.) ■

ARPC creates safe space for honest conversations

By Staff Sgt. Katrina M. Brisbin



In response to recent national events, Chief Master Sgt. Billi Baber, Headquarters Air Reserve Personnel Center's command chief, and Senior Master Sgt. Tony Peel, HQ ARPC's first sergeant, have hosted a pair of virtual safe-space conversations for members of the ARPC team.

"We have all experienced a trauma," Baber said. "This is not a campaign to change anyone's position. Everyone has a voice and we're here to make sure everyone is heard with the respect and dignity each of us deserves."

The video-based gatherings allowed members to have an honest conversation about what they have been feeling and what they have experienced in the past. The diverse group of participants took the time to share personal stories in order to paint a picture of what their experience with race has been.

"I had no idea so many of my ARPC colleagues had experienced racism up close," said Mark Nelson, HQ ARPC historian.

"I'm glad we have this platform," said Staff Sgt. Breshay Strong, HQ ARPC retirements technician. "These things are

happening and we can't turn a blind eye to it. I hope everyone is on the same page as far as knowing something is wrong and something needs to be fixed. I think with this generation we can make a change."

The overall goal of the conversations was to provide a safe place for HQ ARPC members to share experiences and get a better understanding of how other people are feeling. The sessions are just the start of the center's effort to create a culture shift within the organization.

"I have challenged the people of ARPC to think outside the box," Baber said. "My vision is to make diversity and inclusion a part of our continuous professional development. Learning and understanding each other's individual experiences on a continual basis will only help us be better supervisors, better leaders and better human beings." #ReserveResilient #ReserveReform (Brisbin is assigned to the HQ ARPC public affairs office.) ■

A Different Kind of Enemy

Reserve medics discuss what it's like to battle COVID-19

From Staff Reports

Air Force Reserve medical specialists are highly trained to provide critical care to service members injured in battle; they aren't typically trained to care for patients fighting for their lives on ventilators in crowded city hospitals. But that didn't keep hundreds of Reserve medics from answering their nation's call and volunteering to serve on the front lines of America's battle against COVID-19.

We spoke with several Reserve Citizen Airmen who deployed to New York City this spring to help overburdened health systems care for thousands of people infected with the coronavirus. Here's what we found out.

"The first thing that hits you is how very sick all of these people were," said Col. Ari Fisher, a physician assistant from

Albany, New York, who deployed for two months and was assigned to the Jacobi Medical Center in the Bronx. "We had all been watching the news and we knew it was bad, but I didn't think it was going to be this bad. The entire hospital had basically been turned into one big intensive care unit."

Fisher, who works at a gastroenterology practice as a civilian, said he wasn't used to treating so many critically ill patients. "We see sick patients at our practice, but most of our patients aren't dying. Here, everybody was on ventilators. They were critically ill with a very high fatality rate. There were patients who were intubated in the ICU when we got there and they were still there when we left. It was unlike anything any of us had ever seen before."

Air Force Reserve physician assistants who deployed to New York City to serve on the front lines of America's battle against COVID-19 pose for a photo. Left to right are Capt Kamille Resetz, Lt. Col. Matt Bershinsky, Maj. William Steele, Lt. Col. Troy Houston, Capt. Andrew Cruz, Col. Ari Fisher and Capt. Heather Duggan. (Army Sgt 1st Class Greg Sanders, 22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



First Lt. Paula Bomar, 307th Medical Squadron nurse, arrives home at Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, in early June. She was one of the first people from the unit to deploy to New York during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Master Sgt. Ted Daigle)

As the individual mobilization augmentee for the chief physician assistant consultant at the Air Force Medical Readiness Center, Fisher said he was proud of how Reserve physician assistants responded to the coronavirus crisis.

"There are only about 40 physician assistants in the entire Air Force Reserve and there were eight PAs who were on the initial deployment of Reserve medical specialists to New York City the first weekend in April," he said.

Fisher said he was honored to help care for the people hit hardest by COVID-19 and to provide much-needed assistance to New York's overburdened health care workers.

"These doctors and nurses were essentially deployed inside their own hospital," he said. "When we got there, they were in desperate need of some rest and some assistance. My only regret is that we didn't get there earlier so we could have helped as COVID spiked. When we got there, it was actually starting to level off a little bit."

Lt. Col. Matt Bershinsky, a physician assistant who works in orthopedic pediatric surgery at the University of Colorado as a civilian, deployed and spent nearly two months serving at Lincoln Hospital in the South Bronx.

"The hospital is in one of the poorest neighborhoods in New York," he said. "A lot of the people who live here are very poor and there is a high rate of mental illness and disease. These were the people getting hit especially hard by COVID."

Like the Jacobi Medical Center in the Bronx where Fisher

worked, Bershinsky said Lincoln was basically turned into one big ICU.

"Interestingly, the place where we spent most of our time was the mother-baby unit, which had been turned into a makeshift ICU," he said. "There was this crazy dichotomy of bright blue and pink painted walls and nursery windows and it was all overridden by a lot of really sick people fighting for their life."

Bershinsky, who is assigned to the 624th Aeromedical Staging Squadron, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, as a Reservist, spent 16 years as an Army medic and he said he has never seen anything to compare to this deployment.

"There's an old saying that no matter how bad things get, at least you're not doing it in MOPP-4 (the highest mission-oriented protective posture requiring full protective gear). This whole deployment was done in MOPP-4. We were in full gear all day."

Bershinsky said the toughest thing about this deployment was having to watch so many sick people battle their illness without the support of friends or family members at the hospital.

"There were no visitors allowed," he said. "For me, personally, it was exceedingly difficult to watch these people who were suffering alone. Even the people who were there taking care of them were wearing the equivalent of MOPP-4 so there was no human connection. You're wearing masks, goggles, gowns and head coverings so you don't even look human. There was a loss of humanity for these people. I come from a practice where it's



Reserve Citizen Airmen medical volunteers from the 349th Medical Group, Travis Air Force Base, California, pose for a photo in New York City. Air Force Reserve Command mobilized about 1,000 Reserve Citizen Airmen in support of COVID-19 relief efforts, including more than 200 medical personnel to New York City. (courtesy photo)

extremely interactive – taking care of kids who want to talk and laugh and interact. Having that complete separation was extremely difficult.

“It was even more difficult when it came to the end of life. We had an iPad and we would literally Facetime the patient’s family and let them say their goodbyes. That was really, really hard.”

Like Fisher, Bershinsky said he wished he could have deployed a little earlier. “We got there at the peak of the pandemic, which means they had been dealing with it for weeks and weeks,” he said. “We got there just in time to give them some relief. They were really hard hit and we came in and said, ‘just tell us what we need to do to help.’ They were extremely grateful to get the help.”

Capt. Heather Duggan, a physician assistant who works at a Veterans Administration outpatient urology clinic in Charleston, South Carolina, as a civilian, deployed to the Jacobi Medical Center in the Bronx, and spent most of her time working in a 10-bed ICU.

“We were full the whole time,” she said. “And we didn’t have a lot of movement of patients. The patients we had were basically there the whole time. It was all hands on deck, doing whatever we could to help the nurses and doctors do whatever needed to be done in terms of direct patient care.”

Duggan, who is assigned to the 560th Red Horse Squadron, Joint Base Charleston, as a Reservist, said the work was extremely difficult, but also very rewarding.

“We were constantly just chipping away at anything we could to help these patients do just a little bit better,” she said. “I think everybody looks back and says, ‘I wish I would have had this training so maybe I could have done a little more,’ but I definitely think we helped out. At the end of the day, even the smallest things you could do still had a huge impact.”

Like her fellow PAs working in New York, Duggan said she

was honored to be able to provide some relief to both patients and medical workers battling COVID.

“When we first got there, you could see how taxed everybody had been,” she said. “It was great to support them. You could see the excitement and relief from the medical staff knowing they were going to be able to get some assistance. To hear the gratitude from patients who came off of ventilators and from the staff was very gratifying. Those are feelings of joy that are different from anything else.”

Lt. Col. (Dr.) Pen Hou, a family medicine doctor assigned to the 446th Aeromedical Staging Squadron, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, said the two months he spent deployed to New York City would be the “the pride and memory of my life, 100% positive.”

Hou served on the internal medicine team at the Jacobi Medical Center, where on average the team saw 20 patients a day. Over the course of two months, Hou’s medical team treated 1,000 patients, mainly COVID-19-related.

He said his fondest memories are of the times when patients beat the disease.

“In the hospital’s intensive care unit, whenever a patient was extubated, the hospital would play celebration music,” he said. “We knew then that a patient was likely to have recovered and could be turned to less acuity care. I heard more and more music every day, and one day, one of the ICUs had been closed because it was not needed. That was an unforgettable time.”

Jacobi Hospital showed its support for all service members who assisted there with a sendoff ceremony May 29. Christopher Mastromano, NYC Health + Hospitals/Jacobi CEO, personally thanked all the Reservists in a Facebook post.

“The sacrifices that all of you have made allow us to be here today and do what we do,” Mastromano said. “You gave up your families. You came running in a time of need. And thank you’s are not enough. You’re part of the Jacobi family. We are proud

to have you. So on behalf of New York City, Health + Hospitals, and most importantly the Jacobi family, we thank you and we will fight with you any day.”

Staff Sgt. Trevor Talbert, a medical technician assigned to the 307th Medical Squadron, Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, was one of nine members of his unit who deployed to New York in early April.

He said the situation was dire when the Reserve Citizen Airmen arrived.

“The civilian staff at my hospital was burned out and depleted,” he said. “There were at least 40 patients on my floor and the numbers didn’t start to go down until (right before we left).”

He explained those numbers included a broad age demographic, with patients ranging in age from twenty-somethings to octogenarians.

“COVID-19 does not discriminate,” he said. “They all struggled.”

Reserve Citizen Airmen’s efforts helped save lives, but they had to learn to deal with losing patients as well. Talbert spoke about leaving the bedsides of patients at the end of a shift and returning the next day to find out they passed away.

“It makes you appreciate the important things in life,” said Talbert. “It never became normal, and I’m glad because I didn’t want to become lax about treating them.”

Capt. Aaron Biggio, a nurse with the 307th Medical

Squadron, said hospital staff, patients and even the general public showed deep appreciation for their efforts. He said people in the neighborhood would lean out of apartment windows, cheering for them during shift changes.

“I’d get thanked in the streets by total strangers, often with tears in their eyes,” said Biggio. “There is no one in New York who doesn’t know someone affected by the disease.”

Talbert said the Airmen did their best to serve the patients beyond standard medical care. He recalled using his cellphone to set up video chats between patients and loved ones.

“We were the only family they had while they were under our care,” he said.

Throughout the deployment, Airmen worked 12-hour shifts and, in some hospitals, faced patient loads well beyond normal capacity. Biggio said he would do it all over again regardless of the hardships involved.

“I’d get back on the plane right now if they would let me,” he said. “There’s just something beautiful about the humanity of people coming together to fight through something so gruesome.” #ReserveReady #ReserveResilient

(Bo Joyner, Maj. Candice Allen, 446th Airlift Wing public affairs office, and Master Sgt. Ted Daigle, 307th Bomb Wing public affairs office, contributed to this story.)



Reserve Citizen Airmen, along with other military members deployed to help in New York hospitals, were given a celebratory send off May 22 at the Queens Hospital Center in New York City. Military personnel were all thanked for their help assisting hospital staff with COVID-19 patients. (Senior Airman Xavier Navarro)

The Reserve Hypersonics Team

Citizen Airmen helping shape the really fast Air Force of the future

By Bo Joyner



While hypersonic vehicles – those which are capable of going faster than five times the speed of sound – have been around since the 1950s, their use in warfare and defense is expected to grow exponentially in the years to come.

As the Department of Defense looks to expand its use of hypersonic missiles, drones and aircraft in the near future, there is a group of Air Force Reservists with a wealth of both military and civilian experience in hypersonics eager to help the DoD reach its lofty goals.

The Reserve Hypersonics Team was established in the fall of 2018 and is comprised of 22 of the smartest individuals the Reserve has to offer.

“The Reserve Hypersonics Team is very near and dear to my heart,” said Col. Andrew Leone, the RHT director. As a Reservist, Leone serves as the mobilization assistant to the assistant secretary of the Air Force for acquisition, technology

and logistic’s deputy assistant secretary for contracting.

“The purpose of the hypersonics team is not to lead any effort,” he said. “We are an internal consultancy of subject matter experts who are there to augment the current efforts on hypersonics. This is an additional duty for everybody on the team, but they all bring invaluable experience and a willingness to help support the DoD in whatever it needs in terms of hypersonics.”

Five Reserve general officers serve as the RHT’s board of advisors. Team members have a wide range of backgrounds and specialties, from agile acquisitions and contracting to energetic materials and aerodynamics. The “RHT construct” is something the Reserve is looking at duplicating for several other programs across the Air Force.

While much of what the RHT does is classified, the support team members provide ranges from the relatively simple to the extremely complex.

“For example,” Leone said, “when we started looking for a comprehensive list of all of the wind tunnels in the United States capable of conducting hypersonic testing, we found out that such a list didn’t exist.

“When these vehicles travel through the atmosphere or

subatmosphere, they get extremely hot and create plasma (ionized gas). They are actually bathed in plasma. You have to have special wind tunnels to mimic that. So we had a couple of our PhDs do a research project and they were able to put together a comprehensive list of all hypersonic-capable wind tunnels and their capabilities that exist in industry, academia and the military around the country.

“We got it out to all of the stakeholders and it was very well received. It’s a very valuable tool that didn’t exist before.”

As a more complicated example, team members Col. Joseph Tringe and Lt. Col. Harris Hall recently collaborated and completed a study on how hypersonic vehicle plasma interacts with electromagnetic waves. As a civilian, Tringe, who holds a PhD in materials engineering, leads the Nondestructive Evaluation Group at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California, charged with performing static and dynamic measurements on a wide variety of mission-critical materials, components and devices. Hall, who has his PhD in mechanical engineering, is a senior research electronics engineer at the Air Force Research Laboratory in Ohio, with a focus on design and development of novel microsystems as enabling components for next-generation sensors.

For the Reserve, Tringe is the senior IMA for capability integration in the Portfolio Architect Office of the Space and Missile Systems Center. There, he is responsible for identifying and exploiting



Col. Andrew Leone and Col. Joseph Tringe are two of the nearly two dozen Air Force Reservists who serve on the Reserve Hypersonics Team, an advisory group of experts who support the Air Force’s various hypersonic programs. Leone is shown leading a video teleconference from his home (Courtesy photo). Tringe is pictured outside the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California, where he leads the Nondestructive Evaluation Group. (Garry McLeod, LLNL)

cross-cutting technologies for missions including satellite communications, missile warning and positioning, navigation and timing.

As a Reservist, Hall is the IMA to the director of the Air Force Research Laboratory’s Operations Directorate, which provides oversight and guidance for all flight test activities across the laboratory enterprise, including hypersonic test activities. He is also the senior IMA for the Air Force Research Lab’s headquarters.

Their study focused on how the volume of ionized gas, or plasma, which surrounds a hypersonic vehicle during flight can interact strongly with electromagnetic waves, especially those at radio frequencies. This interaction can be exploited for sensing of hypersonic vehicle flight and flight characteristics. Their paper provided an overview of the physics of the electromagnetic wave-plasma interaction, highlighting relevant phenomena for hypersonic vehicles and pointed at future research that needs to be conducted.

Tringe said he is proud to serve on the RHT.

“I’ve loved my time with the RHT because it has allowed me to work

closely with a talented team of motivated Reserve officers and learn more about a fascinating and important problem with major implications for national security,” he said. “I’ve been able to directly apply my technical knowledge to accelerate solutions and integrate efforts that otherwise would have been technically isolated. The skills and knowledge available through the RHT enable important questions about hypersonic vehicles and flight to be addressed quickly and effectively by a multi-disciplinary team with direct links to some of the most effective companies and organizations in the country. We can leverage our civilian and military experiences to inform our thinking and to develop new ideas and solutions.”

Hall said being a part of the RHT has been a rewarding experience.

“Being on the RHT has offered me the opportunity to gain a greater appreciation for this critical technical area for the Air Force and perhaps help advance it,” he said. “It is essential that we engage our total force to the maximum extent possible to address the most pressing challenges and needs our military faces. The RHT serves as a good example of this.”

Leone explained that the RHT was

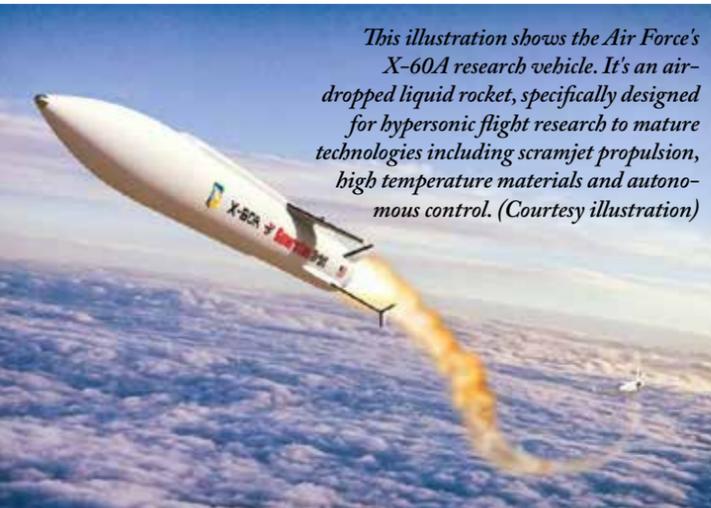
borne out of another Reserve organization – the Office of the Secretary of Defense’s Joint Reserve Directorate – that was established in 2006 to take advantage of the civilian expertise that Reservists often possess.

“The JRD has subject matter experts in a wide range of areas who help guide our decision makers in the research and engineering space to help shape our future fight,” Leone said. “Brig. Gen. John Olson (a current member of the RHT’s board of advisors) thought it would be a good idea to put together a similar team focused just on hypersonics and the RHT was formed.”

The colonel said the RHT has so far primarily been involved with the Air Force and DoD, but is looking to expand its support.

“Our plan now is to work more with the Army and Navy and the other stakeholders,” he said. “Our senior leaders have stated that hypersonics is a top priority for the DoD and it’s vital for our future fight. As we continue to do more and more with hypersonics, the RHT will be there to provide invaluable support.”

#ReserveReady #ReserveReform



This illustration shows the Air Force’s X-60A research vehicle. It’s an air-dropped liquid rocket, specifically designed for hypersonic flight research to mature technologies including scramjet propulsion, high temperature materials and autonomous control. (Courtesy illustration)

Innovation Accelerates Readiness



Acquisition Reservists critical to Air Force's COVID-19 response efforts

By Bo Joyner

While the United States was going on lock-down this spring in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a group of dedicated Reserve acquisition experts were springing into action to help ensure the Air Force would not be grounded by the novel coronavirus.

“This was an unprecedented time in our country’s history,” said Col. Andrew Leone, the mobilization assistant to the assistant secretary of the Air Force for acquisition, technology and logistic’s deputy assistant secretary for contracting. “You had companies being forced to shut down their production lines, logistics chains were disrupted and everybody was scrambling to get their hands on PPE (personal protective equipment). The Air Force acquisition community had to mobilize to ensure what was happening to our country’s industrial base and logistics network would not have a negative impact on our ability to carry out our missions.”

In the early days of the pandemic, Dr. Will Roper, the assistant secretary of the Air Force for acquisition, technology and logistics, established the Air Force Acquisition COVID-19 Taskforce to partner with a similar Defense Department taskforce and help navigate the Air Force’s actions in a time of acquisition uncertainty.

Lt. Col. Gary Frisard was one of a number of Air Force Reserve acquisition experts called upon to serve on the taskforce.

“One of the taskforce’s immediate priorities was to make sure we worked with the industrial base to produce the things that were needed right away – masks, ventilators and so forth – but also really start leaning forward and looking at what happens down the road if plants start shutting down and how does that affect our ability to get parts for weapon systems and everything else that makes us operational,” Frisard said.

The taskforce was divided into four separate lines of effort. LOE 1 focused on quickly acquiring the medical equipment and supplies, like PPE, needed to combat the coronavirus. LOE 2 focused on the long term and exploring investing in critical companies that could potentially shut down if the pandemic continues. LOE 3 focused on the direct impacts to existing Air Force systems. LOE 4 is small-business focused and is centered on preserving the Air Force’s relationship with innovative start-ups.

Assigned to LOE 3, Frisard led a team of more than 30 acquisition specialists who created an acquisition game plan to mitigate the impacts to more than 1,500 defense industry partners, created a unified DoD storefront to capture and record industrial base impacts due to COVID-19 and created a data integration model that prioritized more than \$40 billion in COVID-19 impacts to current Air Force programs and systems.

Frisard said the taskforce members put in some extremely

long hours during the first few weeks of the crisis.

“I am a former intel officer and I’ve deployed a few times, and this was kind of like combat operations,” he said. “We were working 19-hour days and lots of weekends just to figure out what was going on. The pace was pretty remarkable.”

Lt. Col. Jorge Manresa, chief of ventures contracting operations for AFWERX, was another Reservist assigned to the taskforce. He worked on LOE 4.

AFWERX is a community of Air Force innovators who strive to connect Airmen to solutions across the force: whether that be funding, collaborating with industry or simply receiving guidance on a project. AFWERX serves as a catalyst for agile Air Force engagement across industry, academia and non-traditional contributors to create transformative opportunities and foster an Air Force culture of innovation. Its goal is to solve problems and enhance the effectiveness of the Air Force by enabling thoughtful, deliberate, ground-up innovation across the Air Force.

“What really amazed me is that we were able to focus on COVID acquisitions without missing a beat on all of the other AFWERX acquisition projects we have in the works,” Manresa said.

As an example, Manresa said the DoD was able to work with a couple of companies that produce testing swabs to really ramp up their production in a short period of time.

“One of the companies, Puritan, was already producing the swabs and we were able to use the Defense Production Act to invest and help them increase their manufacturing capability,” he said. “With the second company, U.S. Cotton, we were able to help them adapt their facilities to start producing this kind of swab for the first time.

“At the same time we were working on these COVID-specific projects, we were continuing to pursue relationships with our innovation partners that help us bring tech to the warfighter.”

As an example, Manresa cited a recent award that provided \$7.5 million in funds from the National Guard Bureau to Essentium, a small Texas business that produces 3D printers capable of providing critical aircraft parts on short notice for a fraction of the normal cost associated with ordering spare parts from traditional suppliers.

Leone said Manresa and Frisard are just two of the dozens of Reserve Citizen Airmen who stepped up to work critical acquisition tasks in the face of COVID-19.

“I couldn’t be more proud of the Reservists who have answered their nation’s call to serve on the COVID-19 Acquisition Task Force,” he said. “Their actions have helped make sure the Air Force has been able to continue its critical missions during these uncertain times.” #ReserveReady ■

Cyber Resiliency

Reservist a vital part of efforts to keep weapon systems safe

By Raoul Fischer



One of the Air Force’s greatest ongoing challenges in the information age is how to ensure its myriad weapon systems continue to function effectively within increasingly cyber-contested environments. After all, if adversaries can manage to disrupt or stop equipment from working during conflicts, it could have a devastating effect on the Air Force’s fundamental ability to successfully carry out its mission.

Col. Mike Clark is one of a number of Reserve Citizen Airmen on the front lines in the Air Force’s efforts to keep its weapon systems safe from cyber attacks. He’s been involved in the fight since he began his assignment with the then-fledgling Cyber Resiliency Office for Weapon Systems at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio on a cold January morning in 2017.

When he reported for duty, his Senior Executive Service boss told him he had a week to get up to speed. After that, the two hopped on a flight to Los Angeles to brief senior leaders at the Air Force’s Space and Missile Center on how they were going to tackle the Congressional mandate to address Air Force weapon system cybersecurity. Despite the lack of prep time, Clark proved to be a quick study and the pair presented a professional briefing to the SMC leadership.

Working on the cyber resiliency of weapon systems isn’t without its own set of challenges. How do you work with the Air Force acquisition, operations and test communities to gather all the appropriate information in order to make a tangible

difference that helps these communities address potential areas of concern? How do you cross-pollinate information so that all stakeholders are working off the same guidelines and sharing best practices?

Over time, Clark tackled these challenges and others by constantly seeking to align the CROWS and the Congressional mandate with similar ideas from across the Department of Defense.

This frequently resulted in him being asked to speak at prominent events, ranging from working groups to Office of Secretary of Defense events to briefing Congressional staffers on the latest weapon system cyber resiliency updates.

On one occasion, he was invited to brief the Air Force Science Advisory Board on his weapon system cyber resiliency work and how it impacted Nuclear Command, Control and Communications capabilities. The information he presented later became foundational in how cyber security was incorporated into NC3 capabilities.

Likewise, when senior Pentagon officials needed someone to brief the deputy secretary of defense on the latest weapon system updates, they unflinchingly selected Clark as the right man for the job.

His interactions across the Air Force have motivated and inspired thousands of people across countless organizations in government, academics and industry to deal with Air Force weapon system cyber threats collaboratively in order to ensure efforts were being aligned towards the same overarching goals.

Mark Flater, a long-time CROWS colleague of Clark’s, said the colonel was vital to the CROWS mission.

“Colonel Clark knows how to get the best from his team while maintaining a positive outlook,” he said. “He elicits trust from those who work for him that if they do the best they can, they will succeed. And if they fall short, he’ll be there to back them up. He goes into a fight to resolve it, not expand it.”

Joe Bradley, the current director of the CROWS office, agreed.

“Colonel Clark exemplifies the servant leader,” he said. “He never asks his team to do anything he wouldn’t do himself. He is patient and calm under pressure and has a great sense of both himself and the bigger, strategic picture. His professional legacy will be a list of cyber vulnerabilities for the 50 critical Air Force platforms for us to work off of. His team learned from his professionalism, both in terms of how to tackle problems, as well as how to deal with people in a respectful manner.” #ReserveReady

(Fischer is assigned to the Cyber Resiliency Office for Weapon Systems.) ■

Col. Mike Clark is one of a number of Reserve Citizen Airmen on the front lines in the Air Force’s efforts to keep its weapon systems safe from cyber attacks. He is assigned to the Cyber Resiliency Office for Weapon Systems at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.





Tech. Sgt. Chip Perkins, a Reserve Citizen Airman assigned to the 916th Security Forces Squadron, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, North Carolina, recently completed all of the requirements to receive his doctoral degree in business management while deployed to Al Dhafra Air Base, United Arab Emirates.

Motivated By His Kids

Deployed enlisted defender earns doctoral degree

Story and photos by Tech. Sgt. Josh Williams

For one Reserve Citizen Airman deployed to Al Dhafra Air Base, United Arab Emirates, from Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, North Carolina, motivation comes from the desire to set a positive example for his children.

For the last 12 years, while his children slept, Tech. Sgt. Chip Perkins, who was recently deployed as part of the 380th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron at Al Dhafra, studied and wrote papers at night.

All of that effort and sacrifice paid off recently when he earned his doctoral degree in business management. On the journey to that doctoral degree, the 36-year-old picked up a bachelor's and master's degree – all from Colorado Technical University.

"I really pursued my education for my kids," Perkins said. "I want to be someone they can look up to. The fact that I got a doctoral degree is something they can feel they are capable of as well."

Perkins joined the Air Force at the age of 21. After nearly 10 years on active duty

and still having the desire to serve, he joined the Reserve in 2017.

"The military has definitely changed me for the better," he said. "Where I grew up, most individuals who are African-American are either doing time in jail or on drugs."

Perkins credited the start to his quest for higher education to his mentor, retired Chief Master Sgt. Steven Thomas, who strongly encouraged him to take his first college class.

Leaders from the 380th Air Expeditionary Wing were glad to have Perkins on their team.

"It's been awesome having Chip as a part of the 380th during this deployment," said Chief Master Sgt. Alvin Dyer, 380th AEW command chief. "He serves as a great role model through his dedication to his family, education and the Air Force."

Perkins said he is grateful for the support he gets from his wife and family.

"This deployment has had its challenges," said Perkins, who trained for and

completed the Dubai Marathon while deployed. "I was able to get home to see my newborn daughter for the first time. But, to be honest, leaving her was way more difficult than I imagined. We were all incredibly grateful to share that time together."

The future is bright for Perkins, who is hoping to advance with his civilian employer, UPS, or become a teacher.

"We will see what the future holds," he said. "You really shouldn't limit yourself. You never know what you are capable of."

Check out Perkins' video story at <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/742383/reserve-citizen-airman-defines-determination-with-doctoral-degree>. #ReserveResilient (Williams, who is assigned to the 914th Airlift Wing public affairs office, was assigned to the 380th Air Expeditionary Wing public affairs office when he wrote this story.)

Answering the Call

Medical IMAs mobilized for historic COVID-19 response

By Staff Sgt. Tara R. Abrahams

April 4 felt like a typical Saturday for Col. Ari Fisher, an individual mobilization augmentee with the Air Force Medical Readiness Agency. After a busy week in his civilian job as a physician's assistant at a gastroenterology clinic, Fisher was roused from a quick afternoon rest by his cell phone ringing. The Air Force Reserve was calling on its medical professionals for immediate assistance with the coronavirus pandemic in New York City.

He and other Reserve Citizen Airmen were asked to report to Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, within 48 hours. This isn't how deployments usually begin. Often times, military members and the units who support them are given several months to prepare for the trips.

While the movement was rushed for the 13 mobilized IMAs called up from the nearly 287 IMAs who volunteered to support the COVID-19 response, the staff at Headquarters Readiness and Integration Organization, which oversees nearly 8,000 Individual Reservists, was working tirelessly to ensure these Airmen had the best support possible. There had never been a mobilization of IMAs this fast in the history of the Air Force, and HQ RIO had to get creative to make it happen well.

IMAs are not assigned to one centralized location. They are assigned individually to active-duty units across the Air Force. Instead of being sent with other Airmen from their units, they were being sent on their own. They traveled from different cities across the country, from as far away as San Diego, California.

HQ RIO's team quickly created a rapid response cell to assist with all aspects of the mobilization. The RRC supported these Airmen with a 24/7 call center, personalized one-on-one support, help with all administrative needs, travel help and even filled out the required documents for the members. This lifted the stress of needing military computer access and allowed them to focus on getting to where the Department of Defense asked them to serve.

When these medical IMAs arrived at JBMDL they were moved to the hardest hit areas of New York.

"We basically go wherever they need us," said Maj. Tynikka Houston, an operating room nurse with the 59th Surgical Squadron, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas.

While mobilized, Houston was assigned to the intensive care unit at Jacobi Hospital in the Bronx, a unit with all COVID-19 patients.

After about three days of inprocessing, the Reservists were on the floor. They adjusted to the facilities, learned the charting systems and were caring for patients.

Houston said she was usually assigned one or two patients, but would often assist staff and have contact with as many as five per day.

During her 12-hour shifts, she spent hours with patients, helping with whatever they needed and providing a human connection. In addition to medical treatment, the major would do things to help patients get through the day such as play music and charge their cell phones so they could call their children. Not only were the patients fighting the disease, but they were doing so without the ability to see their family members in person.

Fisher, team lead for Jacobi Hospital and assigned to a COVID-19 step-down unit, also went wherever he would be most helpful.

"Some of us are doing everything literally from working as nursing assistants to providers all in the same shift," he said.

If that meant charting for someone, then helping with a blood draw for someone else, then directing care for another, he did it.

"The mission is to take care of the people here, not to worry about what letters come after your name."

After about nine long weeks of difficult work, the coronavirus curve had flattened, and the IMAs and other Reservists were allowed to return home to their families.

The RRC continued to support the 13 mobilized members, and the team came up with innovative ways for the IMAs to accomplish their outprocessing tasks, including health assessments, pay and travel reconciliations, virtual Deployment Transition Center activities facilitated by AFRC/A1 and finalizing orders, virtually.

"The normal systems the Air Force Reserve has for mobilized IMAs aren't optimized for a situation like this," said Maj. Sergio Apedaile, HQ RIO special assistant to the commander and RRC lead. "It presented a lot of challenges for us, and although there are still a lot of things we could do better, I'm really glad we could help in our own way to complete this mission."

"I am extremely proud of the amazing medical officers who brilliantly served the city of New York during the height of the COVID-19 outbreak there. It is an honor to serve alongside them in the Air Force Reserve Command," said Col. Amy Boehle, HQ RIO commander.

"I'm also proud of the rapid response cell members who worked tirelessly to provide truly innovative solutions to make sure our mobilized members had what they needed, and were able to receive all the support necessary to inprocess, serve and outprocess. Being an IMA isn't always easy and being mobilized only adds another layer of complexity. Everyone really stepped up and made it happen." #ReserveReady #ReserveResilient

(Abrahams is assigned to the Headquarters Readiness and Integration Organization public affairs office.)



Capt. Jennifer McGuigan, left, recently joined the Air Force Reserve at age 50. Facing a shortage of critical care nurses, the Reserve granted an age waiver for McGuigan. Here she is pictured with civilian co-worker Iris Appenrodt. (Courtesy photo)

Determined to Serve

Critical care nurse joins the Reserve at age 50



By Master Sgt. Chance Babin

In 12-plus years of working at a Veteran's Administration Hospital, Capt. Jennifer McGuigan has heard many heart-wrenching stories from family members of those in her care as a critical care nurse.

She remembers one story in particular that changed her life and inspired her to join the Air Force Reserve at the age of 50.

"Many years ago, I cared for a Vietnam veteran who had suffered cardiac arrest at home," she said. "The first responders were able to get his heart beating, but he never did breathe on his own. He was brought to our ICU (intensive care unit), and we cared for him for about a week until his family decided to withdraw life-sustaining treatments. While he was in our ICU, his father, who was a World War II veteran, shared with me how difficult it was for him when his son volunteered to serve in Vietnam. He knew firsthand what his son would experience, and even though it broke his heart, he felt he had to honor his son's decision and support his desire to serve."

It was stories like this one that made McGuigan feel particularly close to the families of the veterans in her care. Her children were only 8 and 9 at the time, but his words forever changed how she viewed the families of the veterans under her care.

"My kids are now old enough to join the military themselves, and even though they have not, I think of that World War II vet often," she said. "I want to be able to help care for those serving our country for all of those parents who have had to struggle through the same situation as that World War II vet."

With her children grown, McGuigan decided the time was right to do something about her desire to help those families. So at the age of 48 she set out to become a critical care nurse in the Air Force Reserve.

"I had heard from friends in the Reserve that there was a need for critical care nurses," McGuigan said. "My husband served in the Air Force for 10 years and loved it. When we discussed it, he was extremely supportive and excited that I wanted to serve in the Reserve."

Next, she had to tell her kids of her plans, and to her surprise they were equally supportive.

The Air Force Reserve does indeed have a critical need for critical care nurses. These nurses have an important mission during wartime and have also been in high demand during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The need for critical care nurses was highlighted during the response to COVID-19," said Col. Sherry Hemby, Air Force Reserve Command's command nurse and career field manager. "Many patients diagnosed with COVID-19 had difficulty breathing and were placed on ventilators to assist in their recovery. Critical care nurses, with their amazing attention to detail, were needed to watch every minute. They assessed changes in their patient's condition and reacted with the most skilled care."

"They pulled patients through the COVID crisis. They held the hands of their patients when their family members could not, encouraging and cheering their patients on to fight for recovery."

A retired Air Force colonel recommended McGuigan to Hemby and the command nurse reached out to the critical care nurse.

"I wanted to make sure she realized what was required for the job," Hemby said. "When we talked about deployments, required training and physical demands, she was all in. She told me that fitness had always been important to her and she had no doubt she could pass the fitness requirements."

Master Sgt. Felicia Mintz, an AFRC health professions recruiter, was McGuigan's recruiter for most of the process.

"Capt. McGuigan was wonderful to work with," Mintz said. "She always had a positive attitude and was on top of anything I needed from her. The biggest challenge was the age waiver process."

"Many times the older leads are already in management/administrative positions and don't meet the hands-on experience needed," Mintz said. "As a Reservist, you need to be able to maintain your critical care certifications through your civilian employment. If you're not working in a critical care environment, you will not be able to do this."

Another challenge is being physically qualified through a Military Entrance Processing Station.

"It doesn't matter what age the applicant is, they have to meet the same physical requirements for entry as an 18- or 20-year-old," Mintz said.

"The process of joining was a bit like running a race," McGuigan said. "A lot of it is mental endurance. Going to MEPS was one of the bigger challenges. If I remember correctly, the paperwork went back and forth at least three times before I had my appointment. My favorite part of MEPS was when

I was referred to as 'a person of advanced age.' That made me laugh out loud."

In total, the process that led to McGuigan's oath took more than a year and a half, but she never wavered in her desire to serve.

She was sworn into the Reserve June 6 via video teleconference. After 18 months of striving to join the Reserve, the day had finally arrived.

"After all the ups and down, I think there was a part of me that wasn't entirely sure it would happen," she said. "After I took the oath and everyone started calling me captain, I think I giggled every time. It was such an amazing honor that Col. Hamby was able to do my oath by Zoom meeting and that my family and friends were able to be there."

Mintz found inspiration working with McGuigan.

"Her determination is extremely motivating," Mintz said. "Capt. McGuigan is a great example to the younger generation about perseverance. There was never any guarantee she was going to be able to join, but her mindset was to keep moving forward in the process until she either couldn't go anymore or she was able to oath in."

Now that McGuigan is officially a Reserve Citizen Airman, she is ready to do whatever is asked of her.

"I don't have expectations other than to serve where I am most needed and where my skill set can be of the most help," she said. "I will proudly serve in whatever way I can."

#ReserveResilient

(Babin is assigned to the Air Force Recruiting Service public affairs office.)

Col. Sherry Hemby, Air Force Reserve Command's command nurse and career field manager, administers the oath to welcome McGuigan into the Air Force Reserve via video teleconference. (Courtesy photo)



Maj. Tynikka Houston, an operating room nurse and individual mobilization augmentee, was one of 13 IMAs who deployed to New York City in support of the Air Force Reserve's COVID-19 response efforts earlier this year. For more on what the IMAs did to help the battered city, see the story on page 29. (Army Spc. Genesis Miranda)

